

**Annual Report of the:**

# **State Board of Education**



**September 2006**

## Letter from the Chair:

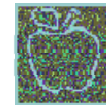
Dear Friends in Education:

What an exciting time to be involved in education in Maine! The challenges are significant, but so are the opportunities. If we are not up to the challenges, the consequences for our young people will be more serious than ever before.

At the beginning of this new century, we realize that more than any other time in our history quality of life and productivity will depend on education. Our young people will flourish or languish in large measure as a result of how well we educate them. We simply cannot fail them.

We must ask and answer correctly some very fundamental questions. What must our children know and be able to do to succeed in this century of rapid change? Are we organized in the most efficient and effective way to deliver quality education for our young? Do we attract and support the best teachers and administrators? Are we "plugged in" to the rapidly advancing technology and its impact on education? The list of questions can go on. Each represents an opportunity to do the right thing for our children—not us adults, but our children!

My personal plea, as you might guess, is that we put children first in answering these questions. Adults, communities, and other considerations simply must take a back seat to our kids.



**State Board  
of Education**

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This report summarizes the major work of the State Board of Education since September 2005. Hopefully, this will be of assistance to you as you try to identify with the work of the State Board. It also serves as an invitation to join the State Board of Education in addressing the issues that will determine in significant measure the future of today's students and the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

James W. Carignan, Chair  
Maine State Board of Education

## Our Work 2005-2006

### TEACHER QUALITY:

This is an area of persistent concern for the State Board, and it should be. All of the literature points to the central importance of the teacher in student performance. There is a clearly established national and state correlation between quality of instruction and student learning. What follows represents the major areas of State Board engagement in promoting teacher quality

### CERTIFICATION AND TEACHER QUALITY

The Certification Committee meets at least monthly to consider the issues before it. Ably assisted by Department of Education staff, the committee brought to the Board recommendations for changes in Chapters 13, 114, 115, and 118.

In Chapter 13 the Board waived standardized testing for prelingually deaf applicants for certification provided they offered proof that

they were prelingually deaf, proficient in American Sign Language and had graduated from a state or nationally approved program for teachers of deaf children. The collaborative work among the Committee, the Legislature and the Baxter School for the Deaf was exemplary and resulted in this good end.

The Board also convened stakeholders' groups dealing with birth to age five certification. One group is seeking a more appropriate test than currently used for the special education content area. A second stakeholder group is researching the appropriate subject area test for regular education, birth to age five. The Board plans to bring recommendations to the new legislature when it convenes in January.

Chapter 114 deals with the approval of teacher education programs. In addition to embedding Maine's Ten Initial Teaching Standards firmly in the rule, the Board

## Members

James Carignan, Chair  
Harspswell

Philip Dionne, Vice Chair  
Brunswick

Joyce McPhetres  
Waterville

Elinor Multer  
Orr's Island

Janet Tockman  
Springvale

Jean Gulliver  
Falmouth

Jack Norris  
Wallagrass

Ann Weisleder  
Bangor

The Board approved the positive recommendation of the University of Maine at Presque Isle visitation team for UMPI's teacher certification program.

The Board approved the University of Maine teacher education programs with the condition that they submit a plan for improving their capacity in the area of diversity. In this regard the State Board aligned itself with the NCATE Unit Board's recommendation.

The State Board also approved the offering of academic credit programs in the State of Maine for Southern Illinois University and New England College

### **KUDOS: MAKE THE GRADE AWARDS:**

Each year the State Board is privileged to recognize school programs that are exemplary around a theme established by the Board. The theme for this year was citizenship education through

community engagement, and the winners were: Poland Regional High School, Mast Landing School, and the Young School. Each school received a check for \$500 as a result of the generosity of TD Banknorth. Congratulations to the teachers and students and our appreciation to TD Banknorth.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The Board hopes that this quick, selected review of Board activity has been useful. Please feel free to be in touch with individual Board members if you have any questions about this material or any aspect of the Board's work. We thrive on dialog with the public.

extended the rule to include administrative standards, advanced programs, and a review of alternative certification programs. High standards for program review continue to be the theme of these revisions.

The policy for prelingually deaf teachers is being added to Chapter 115. In addition, the Board is creating a one-year interim superintendent endorsement. The committee is also working with the Maine Association of School Business Officials on the development of an endorsement for business managers or chief financial officers in school districts. The large sums of money and the complex nature of school funding suggest that standards are in order in this important area of school operations. We hope to complete this work in the winter.

The Board convened a stakeholder's group for Chapter 118 that met for most of the year to re-design the support system for educational personnel. Their work promises to be of major import as we

all move forward on the enduring quest to maintain and ensure high quality teachers in Maine schools. The new rule will be based on the development of Professional Learning Communities in each school—an ethos of collegiality and sharing of best practice and constant improvement throughout one's career by creating the expectation of daily, routine, local professional development. The rule will establish Maine's Ten Initial Teaching Standards as the basis for induction and the attainment of the Professional Certificate. It will put in place a mentoring program for all Provisionally certified teachers that provides support and advice that leads to the development of an e-portfolio based on the Ten Teaching Standards. The portfolio will be assessed by a team of trained teachers from outside the district. A satisfactory portfolio demonstrating the achievement of the Standards will advance the teacher to the status of Professional Certification. Failure to meet the Standards can result in an additional



year as a professionally certified teacher. If a teacher fails to meet the standards after three years they would not be certified. The program will be implemented in stages with the first portfolio assessments occurring in 2011.

For too long we have heard the “horror” stories of new teachers trying to make it on their own. For too long the profession has been dominated by an ethos of individual autonomy. The Professional Learning Community model assumes a high degree of collegiality and mutual support among teachers. The mentoring program and the portfolio development are extensions of that model that promise to assist new teachers as they adjust to the demands of the classroom. The ultimate beneficiaries will be the children in the classrooms of Maine.

### **SYMPOSIUM ON TEACHER QUALITY:**

On September 23, 2005, about 120 teacher educators from around Maine gathered

in Augusta at the invitation of the State Board to hear Linda-Darling Hammond as the keynote speaker and to share ideas on how to improve teacher education in Maine. Professor Darling-Hammond was provocative. She brought many valuable ideas to the Symposium. Over-arching all of them was the central notion that rigor in teacher education programs is essential to the vitality of the programs and to the success of students. She recounted how raising standards at her home institution, Stanford, resulted in increased enrollments and better performance by students.

The Maine participants shared ideas on a variety of topics ranging from how to recruit the best and the brightest to teaching to what constitutes a rigorous curriculum for the preparation of teachers for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Board hopes to host future symposia to stimulate discussion and the sharing of ideas on how to improve teacher preparation programs in Maine. The Board

on. It deserves mentioning here that current levels of funding are not keeping up with the construction need as we face aging buildings that are inefficient for quality teaching and learning and not up to current safety standards.

### **OTHER ACTIONS BY THE BOARD**

The Board considered over two meetings the report of the visiting team to allow Grace Evangelical Center for Undergraduate Studies and Seminary to grant a bachelor's degree. After due consideration, and primarily because of issues of financial planning and fiscal sustainability the Board declined to grant the request.

The Board reviewed the visiting team report for the approval of the Bates College teacher education program and endorsed the affirmative recommendation for a five year approval.

The Board considered the Foreign Language study

group report that made recommendations to increase the study of foreign language in our schools to meet the mandate of the Maine Learning Results. The report called for expanded opportunities for teacher education, exchanges, a new certification, and a number of other recommendations to provide the necessary number of teachers to help to prepare students to live effectively in a global world.

The Board approved the College of Atlantic teacher preparation program contingent on the correction of a matter of practice. That contingency was met.

The Board approved minor revisions to the Maine State Plan for Career and Technical Education under the Carl D. Perkins Act of 1998.

The Board granted Bowdoin College a year's extension on their teacher education program approval. The Board insisted that Bowdoin be ready for the review next year.



Center. They are bursting at the seams and turning away significant numbers of students in a variety of programs. There is ample energy to think outside the box to resolve this, but no solutions were immediately identified. Members of the State Board and the Commissioner offered to continue to meet with the people from Sanford to keep this wonderful problem-solving agenda alive.

#### **MAJOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS BY THE BOARD:**

##### October:

The Board denied Concept Approval for SAD #31, high school

##### November:

The Board gave Concept approval to a new elementary school for SAD #21.

##### December:

The Board gave Design and Funding approval for a new elementary school in Lewiston to replace the Farwell School.

The Board gave Design and Funding Approval for a major addition to an existing building for grades pre K to 4 in SAD #68 in Dover Foxcroft.

##### June:

The Board gave Design and Funding Approval to SAD #40 for a middle school project.

##### July:

The Board gave Site approval for a new elementary school in Lewiston.

At the July meeting, the Board also revised the Approved Project List for the 2004-2005 Rating Cycle by extending it to include those listed in priority order from 14-20.

As we move into the 2004-2005 Approved Project list in the next year, we will have many more projects to report

wants to make clear that we are not concluding that the state of teacher preparation programs is in dire need of help; we merely believe that there is always room for improvement.

#### **RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE LEGISLATURE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:**

The Board has positive and rewarding relationships with the Department and the Legislature. Our strategic aim here was to investigate ways in which we might improve on the good relationships which we enjoy.

To that end, we invited the chairs of the Education Committee, Senator Elizabeth Mitchell and Representative Jacqueline Norton, to join us for breakfast at our annual retreat. We had a good exchange that contributed to our increased understanding of our mutual roles and responsibilities. We look forward to continued discussions in the coming year with the new Education Commit-

tee that will convene in January.

We worked especially closely with the Education Committee this year as we completed a review as mandated under the Government Evaluation Act. We did a self review and report of our duties as required by law and submitted it to the Education Committee. This was followed by three meetings with the Education Committee as we discussed our report and the statutory duties of the State Board of Education. Two minor changes were made in the statutes. First our responsibility to "require that school administrative units develop and carry out a plan for cooperative agreement..." was amended to allow us to "recommend" rather than "require" such action.. The Committee also limited our responsibility to "study school configuration" rather than develop a plan and timeline for the implementation of school consolidation. These changes were entirely acceptable to the State Board. Such large initiatives need to occur in an arena of



wider collaboration and ought not to rest exclusively with the State Board.

The net result of this process was beneficial for the State Board, and, we hope, the Education Committee. We both understand each others concerns better. We hope that many of the legislators with whom we have worked in this last session will return to the Education Committee so that we can continue this fruitful dialog in the next legislature.

Our relationship with the Department of Education continues to be favorable. The Department consists of a hard working staff that is indispensable to the work of the State Board of Education.

We have made a couple of small changes to improve the flow of information. First, we now have a regular agenda item in the morning workshop portion of our monthly meetings entitled, "Report from the Department." This allows us time for discussion with the Commissioner, and it will help us to better fulfill our re-

sponsibility to advise her on the implementation of policy as we are required to do by statute.

In a similar vein we are seeking more time with Greg Scott of the Department. He tracks legislative proposals relating to education. This will give us a better handle on matters before the Legislature so that we can respond in a more informed and timely manner.

## **CHAPTER 61. MAJOR SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION**

The Construction Committee spent many hours in a line-by-line review of Chapter 61. The end result is a clearer and more readable document that brings policy into alignment with best practice. The major policy change was the addition of clear criteria for what constitutes an "adequate education program" for the consideration of construction for high schools of less than 300 students. The criteria fall into two categories: academic program and fiscal sustainability. During the public comment pe-

the Teacher Workload Study. The report indicates that teachers are spending more than fifty hours a week on their work. The Local Assessment System has been a major cause of extra work and stress in the field. It is clear that we must work together to insure that teacher work is focused on their expertise, and extraneous activity does not drain their energy.

10. John Kennedy reported on the most recent NAEP results for Maine. The basic theme is that there has not been significant improvement in any area, albeit there was a minor positive bump in math scores. The flat results for recent years remain a puzzle to all of us. While Maine continues to compare favorably with other states in raw scores, when they are adjusted for Maine's lack of racial and ethnic diversity, the results are much less impressive.

11. We had a lengthy discus-

sion with Frank Murray, Executive Director of the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) on the approaches of TEAC to program accreditation for teacher certification programs. The University of Southern Maine is considering shifting from the National Council For Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) to TEAC in the future. The essential difference is that TEAC asks the program to identify its standards, complete a self study on how effective it has been in meeting its goals, and submit to a visit from a team that assess the self-study with data "on the ground." NCATE, on the other hand, identifies the standards on which it will judge the program.

12. The Board had a long discussion with the Sanford area Boards and Superintendents on the adequacy of the regional career and technical education program and facilities at the Sanford Vocational



- did not see any easy way to make the process less demanding on the nominee. We must comply with the national Teacher of the Year standards in order for Maine's Teacher of the Year to compete. The Board pledged to spend more time on the selection process this year, and, in fact, two Board members participated in the process this year.
6. The Board discussed the Business Manager certification proposal that is before the Certification Committee. The Board reaffirmed its commitment to proceed with this process. It encouraged the Committee to be sure that those who do not have the courses required for certification are allowed ample time to take those courses and qualify. The Board wants to do what it can to insure that highly qualified people are in positions of responsibility in dealing with the millions of dollars of state and local educational expenditures.
  7. The Board entertained a presentation from Michael Moore, Executive Director of Maine Public Spending Research Group. He shared some important data with the Board on how Maine is among the most expensive school systems in the country in terms of per pupil expenditures. His research showed that if Maine could move toward the national norms in school administrative district size, teacher and administrator to student ratios it could realize considerable savings without compromising quality.
  8. We had periodic reports and discussions on the progress being made with the revision of the Maine Learning Results. The Board was supportive of efforts to simplify, reduce the numbers of performance indicators and emphasize the opportunities for interdisciplinary learning.
  9. The Commissioner brought us up to date on

riod the Education Committee suggested that the Board spell out its intention to ensure that any alternative to a new high school should meet all the criteria of an adequate education program, as described explicitly in the rule. This suggestion was accepted and implemented in the rule language.

By action of the Legislature upon recommendation of the Education Committee construction rules are now major, substantive rules and will require approval of the Legislature. In view of the millions of state and local dollars being invested in education facilities, the Board felt this was a reasonable change.

#### **"THE LEARNING STATE: MAINE SCHOOLING IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:**

The work of the Select Panel on Revisioning Education in Maine proceeded through this year. The Board received the draft report in October. Periodic reports were given to the State Board throughout the year on the

nature and the tenor of the discussions that took place around the State with interested parties. In general, while there was concern about some issues (35 school districts!), there was considerable support for the general direction of the draft report. The Board authorized further research by Dr. David Silvernail, Director, Center for Education Policy, Research and Evaluation, University of Southern Maine, on some sections of the draft. That research, which came to the State Board and was available to the Select Panel, in addition to the excellent suggestions we received from interested parties from around the State, will no doubt influence the final version of "The Learning State." It is our intent to release "The Learning State" in early Fall.

#### **WORKSHOP SESSIONS:**

The workshop part of our monthly meetings normally occupy the entire morning of a full day meeting. They are often the most important part of our meetings. They pro-



vide time for robust discussions and rich reflection on the significant educational issues of the day. The Board has historically encouraged appropriate commentary from members of the audience. We invite you to join us whenever you wish.

Examples of the kinds of discussions we have follow.

1. We invited about thirty people from around the State to join us on two occasions to address the controversy surrounding large schools vs. small schools. Our purpose was to try to shift the discourse from entrenched positions on either side of the issue to what was best for students. The dialog was lively, and even contentious sometimes, but always civil. What became clear when we penetrated the rhetorical divisions around this issue is that we all want children to be educated by quality teachers in a well led institution. There must be both a personal-

ized, individualized atmosphere, and an opportunity to access a rich and diverse curriculum. School size did not matter as much as these other issues, and success can be achieved in a school of virtually any size currently operating in Maine. Would that we could all keep our eye on the prize, the final meeting seemed to be saying, and not be diverted from the characteristics of good schools that we all know promote student learning, whatever the size of the institution. At the risk of repetition, it is about the kids.

2. In a related matter Dr. David Silvernail reported to us on research he has done on the issue of school size. Bottom line: size does not matter when it comes to the education of students in Maine. There are small schools (200-400) that do well and large schools (800-1000) that do well in terms of student performance. The data are clear

on this. Student performance data does not dictate that Maine must build small schools. The Board found this to be very important information.

3. The Board was tasked by the Education Committee with looking at the state of foreign language instruction in Maine in light of the upcoming requirement in the Maine Learning Results which calls for the full implementation of language instruction for all students by 2012. A study group representative of all interested parties was convened. It met for half of the year and issued a report to the Education Committee. The report called for a new certification route for elementary school teachers of foreign language, increased offerings of foreign languages in the University System, and consideration of appropriate exchanges with foreign nationals among
4. One of the more upbeat discussions we had concerned the Coordinated School Health Program. We are clearly a leader in the nation in this area. We are making significant strides on both the nutritional side of this question and the exercise front. The Board is committed to supporting the efforts of the Department in this important area.
5. The Board spent some time discussing the processes for determining the Teacher of the Year. This is a program that the Board is fully behind. While there is a cumbersomeness to the process of nomination and consideration, we